

done that would almost certainly have resulted in the leopard getting away either to die in agony or perhaps to become a menace to both stock and human life. If this is inexperience then I have to plead guilty and so would Bob Ruark.

It has also been said that our most elementary mistake was not to have climbed a tree and pot at the leopard from the safety of its branches. That of course we could have done as we could also have gone shooting bison over water-holes and rabbits from a Sherman tank. As it was we were already face to face with a wounded leopard, and if the plain truth has to be told it simply seemed to us more sporting to give it a fair fight on its own ground where the odds were about even. That we both got hurt was surely just part of the game and nothing that any sportsman would ever complain about. Certainly Bob Ruark never complained.

And he got a good story. Indeed, when I think of what he wrote about Sherman tanks and tigers after his first trip, it seems to me that some good did come out of this shoot after all.

MANDIKHERA ESTATE,
P.O. MATKULI,
PIPARIA, M.P.,
August 6, 1962.

HUGH ALLEN

2. A LEOPARD CAT (*FELIS BENGALENSIS* KERR) IN CAPTIVITY

(With a plate)

Of all the wild cats of Asia, the Leopard Cat (*Felis bengalensis* Kerr) is believed to be the most intractable and difficult to tame. My personal experience confirms this, and the four which I have kept at various times remained extremely wild. It is therefore all the more surprising to hear of the very pleasant experience of a tea planter couple of north Bengal, Mr. Keppie and his wife, who found a young leopard cat to be a very tame and lovable creature. I am very grateful to Mrs. Keppie for giving me the full story.

Apparently in March 1960 two kittens were brought from the forest near the Bhutan foothills when they were just a few weeks old. They would not take milk and were very wild, hissing and spitting every time attempts were made to feed them. Then a piece of raw meat was tried, and eagerly devoured. After that they were fed on raw meat and water, but they would take only very little milk.

After a month the weaker of the two kittens died. The remaining one became ill with 'loose motions' but was carefully nursed by Mrs. Keppie and dosed with sulphathalazole—each tablet broken into four pieces and each piece placed in a piece of raw meat. After three days of this treatment the kitten was cured. It seemed to appreciate the attention given to it, for after that it became very tame.

For house cleanliness a sand-box was placed in the mosquito room on the verandah where the kitten lived, but she (it was a female) would not use it, preferring a hole in the wooden floor. Later on, when the kitten found her way round the bungalow, she started using the outlet hole in the bath tub, and appeared to be happy near water 'for her habits'. One day she was found swimming up and down the bath tub filled with water. Another day she fell into the water-closet in the bath-room, and was later seen perched on the edge of the seat and using this item in the correct manner. Ever afterwards she used the water-closet in this way, thus eliminating that tiresome cleaning up usually encountered when wild creatures are kept in the house.

As she grew up she became very fond of the Labrador dog. During daytime she preferred to sleep on a tree and at night came in when called. Then she started spending much time in the tea bushes, and on returning to the bungalow in the evening she was kept in the bedroom for safety. She had evidently by this time become a very tame and affectionate pet.

But in October, when she was about eight months old, she began to show signs of restlessness. She disliked being shut up at night, and would sit at the window longing to be out in the darkness.

'Then one evening early in November, she came in as usual for her evening meal and then went out again, and I thought she wanted to play a bit more so I left her for a while; when I again went out to call her in, she kept on looking at me, and walking away towards the bushes, and then came back to me if I did not follow, almost asking me to go with her into the jungle, as if I was a jungle pal of hers. I left her for a while, and then when I went once again to call her in, she did not answer or come in ever again. . . . Then one or two labourers told my husband that they saw her with another cat, but we did not ever see her again to our great sorrow. I thought she may have returned some time to have her kittens but this she never did.'

UPPER SHILLONG,
ASSAM,
April 30, 1962.

E. P. GEE